

NRV EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS REGIONAL AUTHORITY HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 28, 2011

The New River Valley Emergency Communications Regional Authority has named Donna R. Brown, ENP as its first Executive Director effective May 1.

“We feel strongly that Donna’s depth and breadth of experience will be a considerable asset as we address the many challenges inherent in building a cohesive team and creating a stellar model for regional emergency communications,” said Virginia Tech’s Sherwood Wilson, Chair of the Authority. “Her unique experiences in this field and region will allow her to be an effective advocate and mediator for the law enforcement officers and emergency responders in our agencies.”



“I’m looking forward to working with all of the public safety disciplines to improve communication services,” Brown said. “The collaboration will be a rewarding and exciting endeavor for the entire region and I’m honored to be part of the team.”

Brown comes to the Authority from the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) where she served as Regional Public Safety Communications Coordinator. In this role she has worked with agencies across Southwest Virginia to plan and implement various technologies, including every facet of emergency communications. Prior to her work with VITA, Brown was employed with the Salem Police Department for 20 years. She started as a dispatcher and then spent 17 years as Communications Supervisor for the 911 Center.

Brown graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in information technology from American Intercontinental University and earned an associate’s degree in police science from New River Community College. She teaches courses for the National Emergency Number Association and is a certified Emergency Number Professional (ENP).

Montgomery County, the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg and Virginia Tech began discussing the need for integrated communications among fire, rescue and law enforcement responders in 2008. In March 2009, a working group was formed to commission a study of the technical and economic feasibility of establishing a regional 911 emergency center and radio system. The working group also hired RCC Consultants Inc. to develop a strategic plan for consolidating four separate dispatch operations into one consolidated center. In 2010, the General Assembly authorized the creation of the regional emergency communications authority, which became a reality when the County, the Towns and the university adopted resolutions creating the Authority.

Working with the board of directors, Brown will develop a business plan and all operating policies, secure additional funding and coordinate the merger of the four existing dispatch centers into a single New River Valley Emergency Communications Center.

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She will also be responsible for oversight and management of the center, which is expected to be fully operational by 2015. Current plans include locating the center in the current Montgomery County Courthouse in Christiansburg after its renovation into the public safety building. The center, which will have approximately 45 staff members, will provide public safety communications and dispatch services for law enforcement agencies, fire departments and rescue squads of the member agencies.

The feasibility study -- funded with Wireless E-911 Funds -- found that a shared communications center would generate savings in capital equipment costs over 20 years rather than operating separate centers and replacing expensive equipment at multiple sites. Other consolidation benefits include:

- Increased quality of emergency care to residents and students by implementing emergency medical dispatch.
- Personnel efficiencies through cross train personnel and scheduling, minimizing operational costs.

The region also received funding through the Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) Grant Program and Enhanced 9-1-1 Grant funds totaling \$751,000. The awards will support the consolidated solution for replacement of call processing equipment among the town police departments and sheriff's office, eliminating the need to purchase separate equipment. In addition, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) has provided \$166,000 in funding to develop plans for transitioning from four public safety answering points to a consolidated center and to assess radio frequency to ensure maximum interoperability.

For more information, please visit www.nrv911.org.



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